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To: [FS-objections-southwestern-regional-office](#)
Subject: Stop the land swap at Oak Flat
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The land swap proposed by Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton to facilitate the copper mining at Oak Flat should not happen. The mining would destroy Oak Flat, resulting in the desecration of a place that is sacred to the Apache people. Also the mining would create a huge crater and slag heaps of contaminated tailings that would be an environmental hazard for centuries. No mine should be permitted at Oak Flat.

In her book *Oak Flat*, Lauren Redniss quotes stories from several Apache tribe members about the sacred importance of Oak Flat to them. For many centuries the site has been used for religious and coming-of-age ceremonies. People have gathered medicinal plants and acorns there. Also there are Apache archaeological sites that have been documented. The mine would destroy all that.

From another perspective, the mine makes no sense. The copper ore is only 1.5% of the material that will be excavated on the site. That leaves 98.5% as tailings and residue. Over the 40 year planned life span of the mine, that material would have to be disposed of. Where would it go? What contaminants would leech out of that material and flow downhill to rivers and ground water supplies? Arizona does not need that problem facing it.

60 years ago President Dwight Eisenhower signed an executive order withdrawing Oak Flat from federal lands open to mining. He was right then, and the land should remain as the natural treasure that it is.

Stop the Land Swap process.

Robert Viscount

